

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



**GLORIA DEI**  
LUTHERAN CHURCH

# COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear Gloria Dei Family,

As we gather for this year's annual meeting, I am reminded of one of my favorite passages in Scripture, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, which begins, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." This timeless wisdom speaks to us today as we reflect on the past year and look forward to the future. It reminds us that God ordains all seasons of life - times of planting and uprooting, building and mending, weeping and rejoicing.

This year at Gloria Dei, it is clear that we are entering a new season - a time for progress. Together, we are embarking on an exciting journey that will shape the future of our church and its mission. Our upcoming capital campaign represents not only an opportunity to strengthen our physical campus but also to deepen our commitment to God's work in Sioux Falls and beyond.

I want to reaffirm the priorities of this campaign:

1. **Retire our current mortgage debt of \$1.5 million**, freeing us to focus on future growth and ministry.
2. **Establish a \$500,000 Maintenance Fund** to ensure that our facilities remain strong and ready for years to come.
3. **Prepare our site for future expansion** while improving our current campus to better serve our congregation and community.
4. **Expand with a large Multi-Use Room and a second Gym**, which will provide space for fellowship, ministry activities, and outreach opportunities as we continue to grow.

Our financial goals are ambitious but achievable:

- Our **current goal** is \$4 million, which will allow us to address priorities 1, 2, and 3.
- Our **stretch goal** is between \$7 million and \$12 million, enabling us to break ground on expansion projects that will carry Gloria Dei into its next chapter of ministry.

This campaign is about more than buildings or budgets - it's about building a legacy of faith for generations to come. It's about creating spaces where children can learn about God's love, where families can grow together in faith, where we can serve those in need, and where all are welcome to experience the grace of Jesus Christ.

Ecclesiastes reminds us that God makes everything beautiful in its time (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This is our time - a time to come together as a congregation with bold faith and shared purpose. I invite each of you to prayerfully consider how you can be part of this journey. Whether through financial support, prayer, or participation in campaign activities, your involvement matters deeply as we step forward in faith together.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. I am continually inspired by your faithfulness and generosity. Let us embrace this season of progress with open hearts and steadfast trust in God's plan for our church.

In Christ's Service,  
Sara Greff Dannen  
Council President, Gloria Dei Lutheran Church



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Ministry of

# WORSHIP AND EVANGELISM

Report by Pastor Tim Selbo

There are so many stories of people being impacted by worship life at Gloria Dei. Through the praise of God in song, the hearing of the word in sermons, receiving God's promises through the sacraments of Communion and Baptism, and the welcoming and supportive atmosphere within this community, God is changing countless numbers of lives.

Here are just a few examples. Kristi Point shares that the different worship times and options available at Gloria Dei are important

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**“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness. Come before him with joyful songs.”**

- Psalm 100:1-2

and impactful for her family. With two teenagers, she and her husband Justin have busy schedules and commitments. Sometimes they worship on the weekends; other times worship works best on Wednesday evenings; and when they can't worship at Gloria Dei in person, they have loved the online option. Kristi says that when they can't be here in person, the family gathers in the living room on Sunday nights and together they watch and participate in the YouTube online option, available at any time during the week. Kristi says, "It is great to be able to worship in this way and to have so many options that fit into a busy family schedule."

Jerry and Nancy Tieszen tell their story of coming to Gloria Dei. Here is what they say:

"Gloria Dei has absolutely transformed our faith life! We had been looking for a new church home. On our first visit to Gloria Dei, we were amazed with the warmth and spirituality that we immediately felt as we worshipped. With each successive worship experience, we were struck by the sermons which were biblically based and so relevant to our lives. When Pastor Tim mentioned in one of his sermons that 'the proclamation of the Gospel happens here', it truly crystalized the feelings we were experiencing. Upon entering the sanctuary after Covid restrictions were lifted, a visceral sense of belonging came over us as we worshipped with fellow believers. It solidified the importance of coming together to worship and hearing the gospel preached."

**"So then, faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ."**

- Romans 10:17



## BY THE NUMBERS

Average In-Person Attendance	951
Average Online Attendance	265
New Members	250

### PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms	81
Marriages	10
Funerals	9
Confirmation of Youth	77

Sarah Rosin shares how music is so important to her within worship. Sarah says, "Music has always been an integral part of worship."

It's where I feel God the most, whether its traditional hymns, camp songs around the fire, or contemporary Christian music. I've loved being part of the music at Gloria Dei. It gives me purpose and belonging. I've never spent lots of time memorizing Bible verses or passages, but I know so many through music. Music is my love language at church."

Sarah's nine-year old daughter, Lillian, shares her mom's love for music. Lillian says, "I've always loved singing and my Mom loves to sing. I think she basically passed it on to me and I think that is just the way for me to worship."



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I love these stories of how worshiping God at Gloria Dei is so meaningful and impactful. And we could share hundreds more. To God be the Glory.



## DID YOU KNOW?

- Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel of Jesus Christ remains our Number One Value
- Gloria Dei continues with a worship style we like to call "Blended". We enjoy singing praise to God utilizing a mix of traditional hymnody and contemporary Christian music.
- Special Music throughout 2024 enhanced our worship experience. A big thank you to all of our choirs and musicians.
- Our tech crew continues to do a fantastic job of making both in person and livestream worship vibrant and spirit filled.
- Weddings and Funerals are part of the holy encounters we have with God.
- We continue our partnership with Augustana University as host to the Annual Christmas Vespers and many other concerts and performances throughout the year.
- A strong word of gratitude to the many volunteers who continue to make worship happen each week, both in person and online.





Ministry of

# ADMINISTRATION

Report by Pastor Heidi Binstock

Setting the stage for ministry to happen takes many hands and, sometimes, creative thinking.

A building that's used seven days a week. A kitchen that serves 300 meals on a weekly basis. Space that supports the rehearsal schedules of at least nine different music groups. A gym that, on Wednesdays, between preschool, church school, confirmation and high school youth group, has about 400 children and youth rotating through

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its doors. A sanctuary that is prepped and cleaned for four separate worship services that, on average this last fall, made space for a collective 1400 people. Toilet paper and paper towels that are refilled (and refilled and refilled!) in three large banks of restrooms.

The big picture of Gloria Dei is that we exist to draw people in to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Behind that big mission, though, is a whole team of people, staff and volunteers, who seek to provide the space





and processes that make the doing of that mission go smoothly and efficiently. They make sure that spaces are clean and prepped. They take out the garbage, rearrange rooms, clear snow from sidewalks, and manage pigeons.

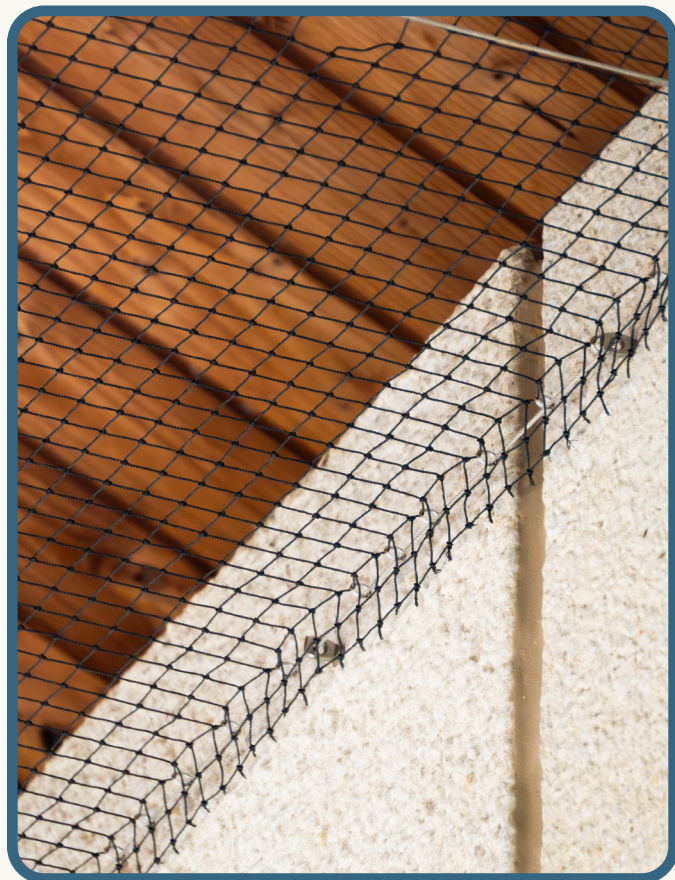
That's right, pigeons.

Over the years, a local flock of pigeons has grown to love Gloria Dei as much as its members do. It only takes a few times to walk into any entrance of Gloria Dei to notice that the overhangs have become a favorite

roosting place for these pigeons, in spite of the spikes that were installed to discourage them from doing so. If you have missed seeing them roost there or not heard their low cooing as you walk in, you needed to only look down, where you could find ample evidence of their presence.

Lots of solutions have been proposed and tried to encourage the pigeons to live elsewhere. Birds of prey sound recordings, more spikes, trying to attract more hawks. Last year, on a trip to Washington, D.C., lead custodian Tim Schillerstrom stumbled on a

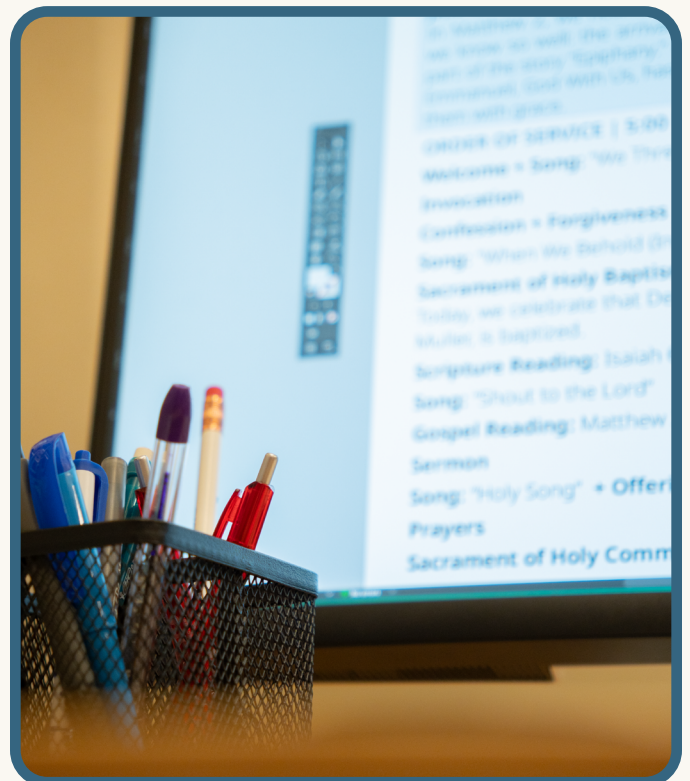
solution the Park Service used at the Lincoln Memorial: netting. If it worked at a national memorial, why not Gloria Dei? So, this fall, in a team effort that included full- and part-time staff, plus one committed volunteer, netting was installed at every entrance. The pigeons are still around, but they are no longer able to roost in our entrance overhangs.



It's easy to not notice the clean sidewalks, but it was hard to not see the dirty ones! Thanks to a team of people who did not give up on a problem but thought about it creatively and critically, staff can now shift their time back to where our mission drives us: making space and welcome for every person (sorry pigeons!) who walks through the doors of Gloria Dei so that they can hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Behind the scenes at Gloria Dei, there is hard work that happens daily to support our ministry teams. They manage equipment and maintain supplies. They schedule rooms, baptisms, weddings, volunteers, emails, social posts, and maintenance checks. They keep track of information and people. They manage budgets and bills. They work hard, but with a goal that their work goes unnoticed so that what is seen is the ministry itself and what happens is that people are engaged in faith.

And if you are worried about the pigeons and where they will roost, know that they have found a new love for the Gloria Dei roof, where, it turns out, they are just fine.







Ministry of

# CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILY

Report by Pastor Sarah Goldammer

He came running through the doors of the church. Great big smile on his face. His parents following behind, dressed up for a night out themselves. Their first words as they make it to the sign-in table are, "He has been so excited to come all week. He told the bus driver, his teachers, his grandparents, everyone that that he knows, that it is Kids 'Night Out this week and he gets to have so much fun at his church."

Kids' Night Out has been a long tradition at Gloria Dei. It was meant to be a fundraising



“... we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might and the wonders that he has done.”

- Psalm 78:6

event, but it has become so much more. Kids 2 years old to 5th grade come to have a fun night out at Gloria Dei. Pizza, gym time, crafts, toys, movies, are all part of the fun but the best part are the relationships that are formed. High School and Middle School youth, with some adults also, welcome these kids on Friday night as they come in. The kids find their favorite youth to hang out with for a night of fun and fellowship. It has become an event for kids and youth to have another positive experience in church, which hopefully will always feel like home.

It is also such a great way for our youth to serve and use their gifts. They are learning how to be leaders; they are also learning what it means to be a church community. This simple fundraiser that was so faithfully started many years ago, has been impactful

and continues to be impactful. It helps to pass on faith to the next generation.

Faith doesn't just happen; it happens in community. We pass on the faith from generation to generation through telling the story of who God is and the stories of the bible. Psalm says 78:4 says, “... we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might and the wonders that he has done.”

We also pass on faith through caring relationships. There are so many examples of this happening throughout the Children, Youth and Family area; VBS, Dei camp, summer camp, church school, confirmation, high school youth group, mission trips, worship, meals, Kids' Night Out, Heavenly



Harmonies, Youth Choir, Milestones, the nursery and so many more.

As we look forward to the future, we are so thankful and grateful for all the ways we continue to grow in ministry and impact. We continue to strive to find ways we can not only grow in numbers but help grow in faith, community, and outreach. We strive to make sure that everyone feels like they are known, can use their gifts, and have a place to serve. We are so thankful for all our volunteers, of all ages, who help pass on the faith to the next generation.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Registered Church Schoolers	<b>475</b>
Kids Attended VBS	<b>82</b>
Kids Attended Dei Camp	<b>121</b>
Church School + ASK* Volunteers	<b>140</b>
Confirmation Students	<b>249</b>
Confirmation Leaders	<b>46</b>
ELCA NYG** Youth Attendees	<b>38</b>
ELCA NYG** Adult Leaders	<b>10</b>
Kids Attended Summer Camp	<b>73</b>
Valley Fair Youth Attendees	<b>56</b>
Valley Fair Adult Leaders	<b>8</b>
HS Youth Group Attendees	<b>80</b>

\*After School Kids

\*\*National Youth Gathering, held in New Orleans in July 2024



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Ministry of

# MISSION & OUTREACH

Report by Pastor Chris Zuraff

In September of 2024, Gloria Dei's first-ever Made Discipleship Intensive said a long, Midwest "goodbye" to their regular, weekly meetings. However, the group had a few things on their agenda before they could wrap up their time together. One of those things was to be introduced to a young mother and her children who had recently arrived in the United States from Guatemala. (To respect the privacy of this young mother, her name has been changed to 'Rosie').

Through Gloria Dei's long partnership with the bilingual Spanish-English speaking Lutheran congregation, Pueblo de Dios, 16 | [Gloria Dei Lutheran Church](#)

the group was introduced to Pastora Maria, Rosie, and her children. The conversation was centered around Rosie's experience in her home country and the nearly impossible decision to leave with her children. At some point in their marriage, Rosie's husband began abusing her. When his attention turned to their two children, Rosie had had enough. She desperately tried to ask authorities for their help, but the police and governing authorities don't function like they do in America. Rosie was getting nowhere with them. She tried to turn to her family, but they feared retaliation from the husband. In the meantime, Rosie had discovered that she

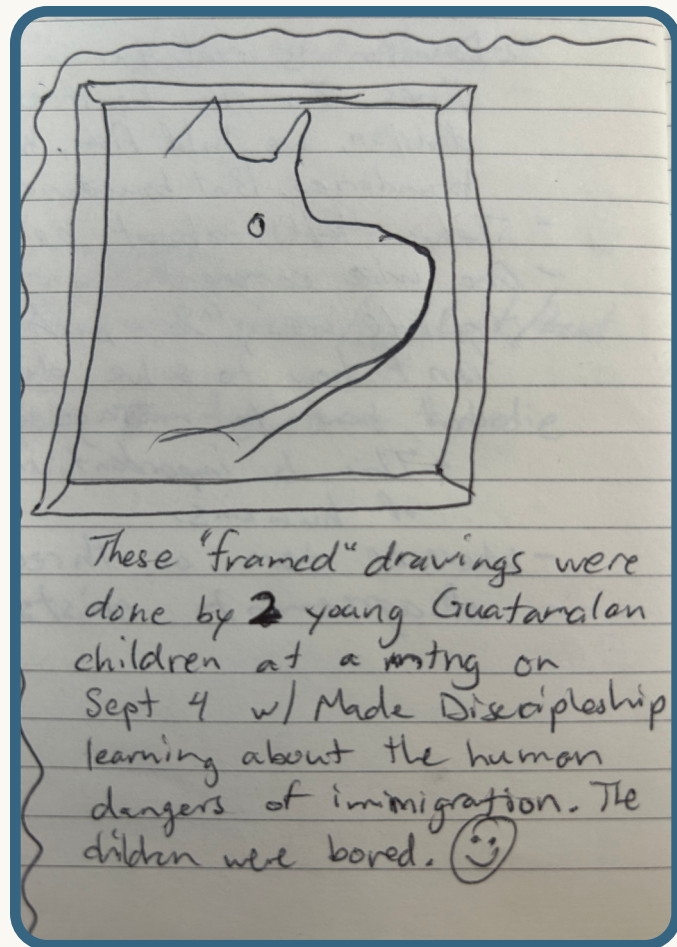


was pregnant with a third child. With very few options, Rosie remembered family and friends who had immigrated to the United States. Thinking mostly of the future of her children, Rosie planned to escape her situation. She scraped together enough money to hire a “coyote” and ensure that she and her children could make it to the southern border of the US.

On her arrival, Rosie and her two children crossed the border as ‘refugees’ or those seeking refuge from personal or political violence. This legal immigration process places these legal immigrants with family and/or friends who sponsor their arrival. But even this legal process is complicated. The process restricts refugees from working until they have the proper documentation. That documentation only comes after a scheduled court date 1 year from the date of their arrival. South Dakota does not have an immigration court, which means that the closest immigration court is in Minneapolis. The legal fees for this court appearance and all the required documentation are nearly \$10,000 per person.

All these factors, and many more, complicated things for Rosie and her children. The immigration process did not go the way it was designed and Rosie found herself in a very precarious position.

As the Made Discipleship group listened to Rosies story and learned from immigration



experts and lawyers, they learned there was very little that could be done to help Rosie with the immigration process. As they looked into Rosie’s eyes, watched her children play around the tables, and heard her baby cry in the next room, their hearts were opened to the very human need in front of them. Her children needed food and clothing and school supplies. And Rosie couldn’t legally earn an income. In response to the call of Jesus Christ, the group donated nearly \$750 dollars of their own to purchase gift cards to Walmart so Rosie could take care of her children in whatever way they most needed. This past Christmas, the Made Discipleship group partnered with Gloria Dei’s Cub Scout Pack 371 and other Gloria Dei members to provide hats, gloves, and more Walmart gift

cards to others in the Pueblo de Dios congregation who are struggling to meet their basic needs.

It is not often that one hears the depth of human need in stories like Rosie's. The Made Discipleship group was called to do so as part of the curriculum. But Rosie's story is not uncommon, unfortunately. All around the city of Sioux Falls are the stories of human beings in need. For one complicated, complex reason or another, the needs in Sioux Falls are only increasing.



As people of faith at Gloria Dei, you've always answered God's call to serve those in need. To meet the basic needs of every human being who has been made in the image of God is to live out Gospel's call to love your neighbor. Whether through our Christmas giving tree, our monthly volunteer efforts at the St Francis House, serving with the Nightwatch Van, the Banquet, providing free haircuts

with Haircuts on the GO, sponsoring a child in Haiti, giving to our Outreach Ministry of the Month, or any of the other amazing things that happen each year, YOU answer this call. One can't possibly know all the stories so in depth, but God calls us each to try wherever we can.

As Gloria Dei looks toward the future that God is calling us to, it's a blessing to know that so many of you will continue to answer that call in these ways. Thank you for the ways in which you live out the Gospel with this congregation.



## BY THE NUMBERS

### NECESSITIES FOR NEIGHBORS

AUGUST 4, 2024

Rolls of TP Donated	<b>1700</b>
Volunteers	<b>17</b>
Families Served	<b>216</b>

### FOOD TO YOU

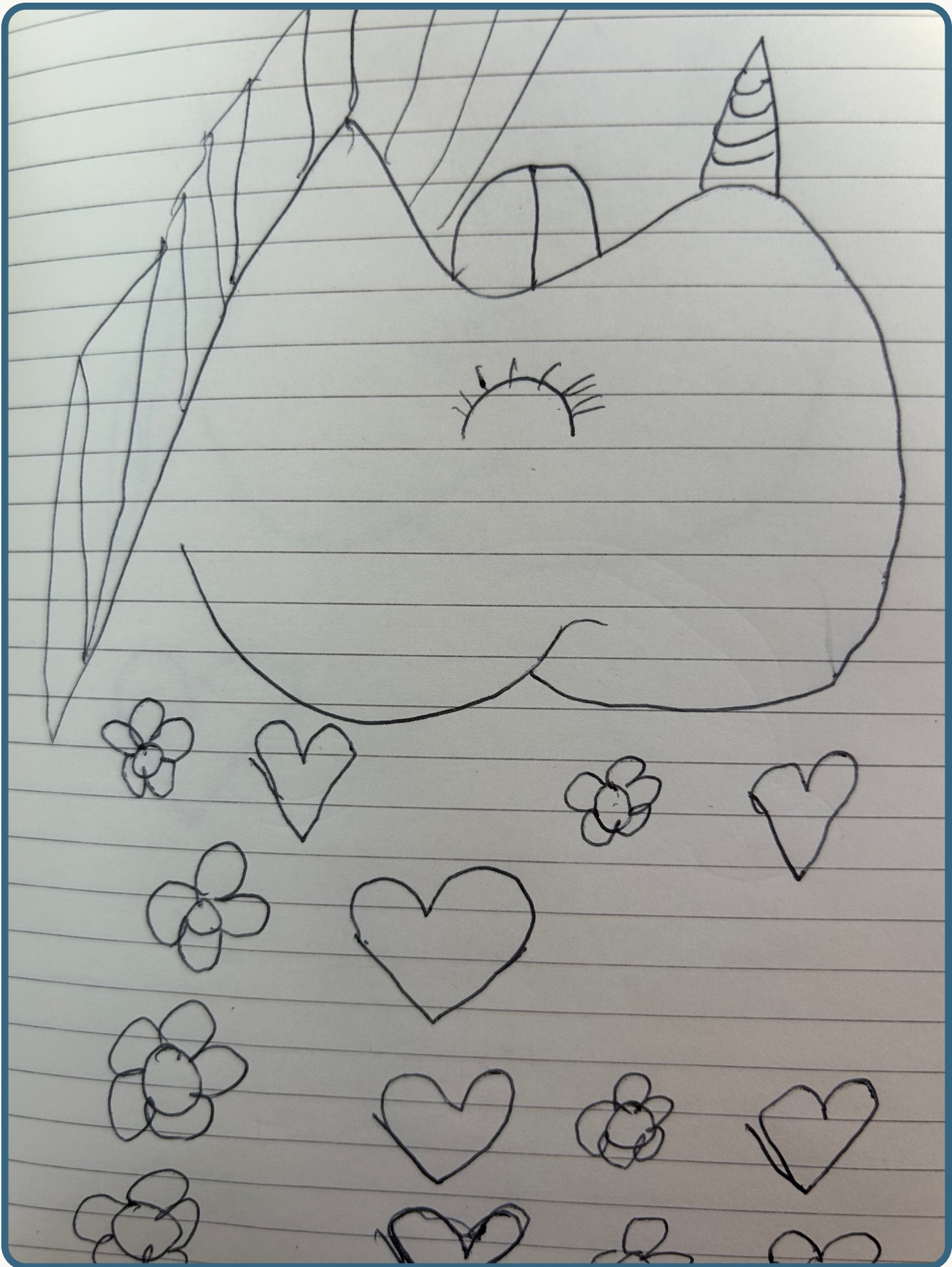
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

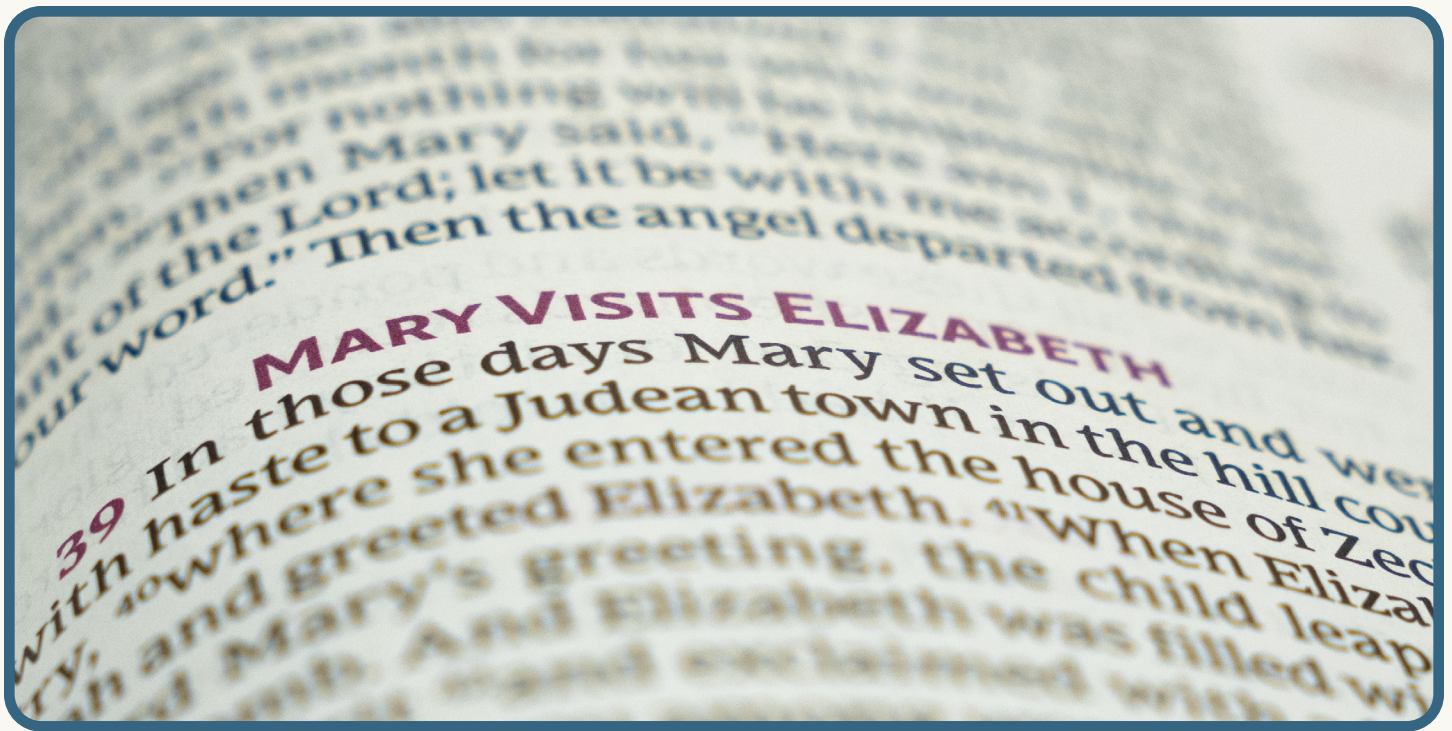
Cans of Soup Donated	<b>411</b>
Volunteers	<b>19</b>
Families Served	<b>90</b>

### THE BANQUET

OCTOBER 10, 2024

Meals Served	<b>250</b>
Volunteers	<b>21</b>





Ministry of

# CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Report by Pastor Amy Martinell

Luke 1:39-42, 49 - "In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!...' Mary sang 'for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.'"

The story of Mary visiting Elizabeth during their pregnancies speaks powerfully of the

importance of faith-filled relationships and connections when you are welcoming a new member of your family. The Congregational Care ministry at Gloria Dei has a strong history of providing care and support during this time through Mighty Ones ministry. Mighty Ones ministry connects families with new children with resources and support. Every time we welcome a new child at Gloria Dei, our Faith Community Nurse Jessica Kruse reaches out to check in with the family's health and wellness, offer tips for worshiping with a new baby, and to share resources including a Gloria Dei member who volunteers her skills



as a lactation consultant.

Member births are also followed up with a gift bag (including a personalized blanket, prayers for the family to use, and resources about child development) and a personal visit to the new mom and baby from a Mighty One minister. Modeled after Elizabeth's care of Mary, these visits celebrate the new child, provide a listening ear, and help connect the family with available resources at Gloria Dei.

Mighty One ministers are Gloria Dei members who feel a call to walk with families during this new stage of life. Their presence is a tangible sign to families that their church celebrates and supports them. As one new mom shared, "Knowing our baby was loved enough by the church to have a gift delivered to our front door meant everything." These

visits also are meaningful to our Mighty One ministers. It is a way for them to share their gifts and Jesus' love with others. These volunteers have shared that they love getting to know members of Gloria Dei outside their usual circle and form new connections.

One family shared the important impact Mighty One ministry had on them. "When we had our first daughter 4 years ago, we didn't belong to a church. It was during COVID, she

## HEALTH MINISTRIES

- **Check'n on the Second:** Free monthly blood pressure and health screenings
- **Medical Lending Library:** Medical equipment available upon request
- **Exercising your Faith:** A weekly time of exercise and Bible Study
- **Walking Souls:** Open walking at Gloria Dei
- **Bloodmobile:** donate blood twice a year at Gloria Dei
- **Pickleball:** Faith, fitness, and fellowship offered through pickleball
- **SAIL (Stay Active & Independent for Life):** A fitness program for those 65 and older
- **Christ-Centered Yoga** meets weekly
- **Balance and Hearing Screenings** offered yearly

was a difficult baby, and we felt incredibly alone and secluded. After having our second child recently, we've discussed how beneficial it would've been to have had the sense of closeness (socially distanced, even) that we feel with our church now. Everything from a homemade blanket from Gloria Dei that our baby uses daily, to the frozen meals that were an absolute blessing on those days when we were too tired to cook. The SPLASH newsletters are precious, and it feels special to get something in the mail just for our beautiful family to enjoy together."

As a Christian community we are called to do life together. Through Mighty Ones ministry, families not only receive practical support and care; they also hear and experience the proclamation of the gospel: "the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name." (Luke 1:49)



## BY THE NUMBERS

Stephen Ministry Visits	<b>280</b>
Mighty Ones Ministry Visits	<b>63</b>
Units of Blood Donated	<b>31</b>
Freezer Meals Shared	<b>111</b>
Prayer Wraps Shared	<b>47</b>
Prayer Requests Shared	<b>106</b>

## SUPPORT MINISTRIES

- **GriefShare** meets weekly in September – December
- **Caring for Caregivers** meets monthly
- **Next Steps: Divorce Support** meets monthly WIT-support and friendship for widows-meets monthly
- **WIT**, support and friendship for widows, meets monthly
- **Stephen Ministry:** lay members that provide one-on-one Christian care
- **Pastoral Visits**
- **Faith Community Nurse Visits**
- **Individualized Grief Care and Resources**

## LOOKING AHEAD

- We have five individuals in Stephen Ministry training and are excited to welcome them as Stephen Ministers in March.
- As our congregation grows, we are improving and systemizing our care to better reach everyone in need of support.
- We plan to continue to grow the offerings of health and wellness ministry.

# Mighty Ones Gift Bag

Baby Liliana James Blake

Birthdate 5/16/2024

Parent(s) Ryan + Cassandra

Siblings Ela-2

Address 5008 Pheasant  
SF SD 57108

Phone 605

Phone 605

Email CASSA



Welcom



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